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## DPHHS HAN Update

Distributed via the DPHHS Health Alert Network (HAN) System  
Tuesday, September 20, 2005 15:57 MDT (3:57 PM MDT)

The information below is provided largely for local public health agencies. Local Public Health Agencies should forward the VFC-related information to their local pediatric vaccine providers. The DPHHS press release following the VFC message, announcing that the DPHHS hotline will be closed, is largely informational and need not be forwarded unless local agencies elect to include it in a local release of information. The press release was issued last Friday, 16-September, coincident with the closure of the DPHHS hotline.

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### ALL CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER DISPLACED BY HURRICANE KATRINA ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE VFC VACCINATIONS

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt announced on Monday that all children from birth to 18 years old displaced by Hurricane Katrina are eligible to receive free vaccines through the federally-run Vaccines for Children program (VFC), regardless of whether they are staying at shelters, hotels, or with family and friends and regardless of previous health insurance coverage status. Managed by HHS' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the VFC helps families of children who may not otherwise have access to vaccines by providing free vaccines to doctors who serve them.

"Children displaced by Hurricane Katrina have been through so much," Secretary Leavitt said. "But with each passing day there is hope for a brighter future for them, and we plan on doing everything possible to make sure their future is healthy. That's why we are taking this step today to make sure children have access to immunizations through the Vaccines for Children Program."

CDC's immunization recommendations for children displaced by Hurricane Katrina are aimed at keeping them up-to-date on routine vaccinations and protecting them from disease outbreaks in large, crowded group settings. The nation's childhood immunization coverage rates continue at record high levels, so there is no immediate threat of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks among these children.

HHS considers all children from birth to 18 years old who have been displaced by the effects of Hurricane Katrina to effectively be uninsured, because they are not expected to have access to medical records or proof of insurance. Taking this action allows doctors, clinics, and health departments who provide childhood vaccinations to immunize these children using VFC vaccine.

All county, Tribal and IHS clinics are VFC providers, so may use the VFC vaccine supply for children displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

County health departments, please forward this guidance to vaccine providers in your local health jurisdictions. If you have questions regarding the Montana Medicaid claim issues, you may contact ACS at 406-442-1837 or toll free in state at 1-800-624-3958. Questions regarding the vaccine may be directed to the Immunization Program at 406-444-5580.

CDC's Interim Immunization Recommendations for Individuals Displaced by Hurricane Katrina can be accessed at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/katrina/vaccrecdisplaced.asp>. Complete information on the full range of accelerated benefits available from HHS for hurricane victims is available at

<http://www.hhs.gov/katrina>. Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

-----Original Message-----

From: Shirley, Gayle

Sent: Fri 9/16/2005 12:12 PM

To: HHS DPHHS ALL STAFF

Cc:

Subject: News: FEMA Sets Up National Hotline; State Hotline to Close

For immediate release

September 16, 2005

Contact: Gayle Shirley, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, 444-2596 or 431-1039

Monique T. Lay, Public Information Officer, DES, 841-3963 or 439-9414

FEMA Sets Up National Hotline; State Hotline to Close

Montanans have a new toll-free number to call if they want to donate to the Hurricane Katrina relief and recovery effort.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established a national donation hotline, which will take the place of the Montana hotline established two weeks ago by Gov. Brian Schweitzer. The Montana Hurricane Relief Hotline will close Friday at 5 p.m. after getting close to 600 offers of help from generous Montanans.

Effective immediately, Montanans should call 1-800-440-6728 to make donations to FEMA's Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort. In addition, toll-free numbers have been established in three of the states hit hardest by the hurricane:

- \* Alabama: 1-877-273-5018
- \* Mississippi: 1-866-230-8903
- \* Louisiana: 1-866-334-8304

Gov. Schweitzer commended Montanans for their outpouring of support for Katrina victims.

"The generosity of Montanans is inspiring," he said. "Montanans are always willing to help, but their creativity and thoughtfulness demonstrate just how much they really care for these victims."

Gov. Schweitzer said he recognized in the first days after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast that Montanans would want to come to the aid of their Southern neighbors. So he asked the state Department of Public Health and Human Services to establish the donation hotline. DPHHS has staffed the phones since Sept. 5.

"The desire to help was immediate," the governor said Friday, "so we established the Montana hotline to help people lend a helping hand. It's now time to transition this service to FEMA so help efforts are more centralized."

The goal Montana's Health Alert Network is to transmit information to local public health authorities as quickly as possible, and assign a suitable priority to the message that is sensitive to the impact of a health-related event providing information of immediate utility relative to the public health and safety of Montanans. For questions or comments relative to Montana's HAN system you may contact the Montana State HAN Coordinator Jim Aspevig at <<mailto:jaspevig@mt.gov>> or the Associate HAN Coordinator Gerry Wheat at <<mailto:gwheat@mt.gov>>

#### Categories of Health Alert messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Info Service Message:** provides general information regarding a situation or opportunity; does not typically require immediate action.

This message has been sent under blind carbon copy (bcc) to suppress the display of a large number of e-mail addresses.

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification data base. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use please notify us as soon as possible by e-mail at [hhshan@mt.gov](mailto:hhshan@mt.gov) <<mailto:hhshan@mt.gov>>